

Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs; Arun Venkataraman, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service; Mohsin Raza Syed, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation; Grant T. Harris, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce; and Laurie E. Locascio, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

RUSSIAN LANDMINES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, among the many barbaric atrocities committed by Russian soldiers in Ukraine where civilian infrastructure including hospitals, schools, and apartment buildings have been repeatedly bombed and shelled and countless civilians have been summarily executed in the streets, the New York Times reports today that the Russians are using a new kind of landmine.

This mine, called the POM-3, is inherently indiscriminate like other mines in that it cannot distinguish between a civilian and a combatant, and it is apparently equipped with a sensor that triggers the explosive when a person approaches. With a kill radius of 50 feet, it is even more deadly than a typical anti-personnel mine. And, unlike typical landmines, it cannot be disarmed by a human deminer because anyone who approaches it is likely to become a victim before reaching it. So it will be necessary to use robots to clear these mines, at great additional time and expense. As in other countries affected by armed conflict, it will be many years and almost certainly decades after the fighting ends, before the people of Ukraine can walk safely without fear of mines and other unexploded ordnance.

Human beings seem to have an unlimited capacity to devise new ways of destroying the lives of others. Landmines are especially insidious because they maim or kill whoever comes into contact with them, or, in the case of the POM-3, whosever's footsteps it detects. It could be anyone, including a young child.

No matter how "sophisticated" the technology, mines are an exceedingly primitive weapon because they are designed to be indiscriminate in an age of so-called precision munitions.

Mines are the opposite. While landmines are so easy to make that it will never be possible to completely eliminate them, in 1997, the international community took an historic step,

thanks in large part to the leadership of former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy and the tireless advocacy of the International Campaign to Ban landmines.

In December of that year, countries came together to sign the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, known informally as the Ottawa Treaty or the Mine Ban Treaty. Today, the treaty has 164 states parties. But one of the reasons anti-personnel mines have yet to be universally stigmatized is because key countries including Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and the United States have not joined the treaty.

Of course, when one country joins a treaty, it does not guarantee that others will. But the more countries that do, the harder it is for others to fail to do so, as they become the outliers, the pariahs. So if the United States, which has not used anti-personnel mines since 1991, were to join the treaty it would not guarantee that Russia would. But it would greatly enhance our credibility to call out their use of mines, their devastating effects on innocent civilians, and the need to universalize the treaty.

In 1994, President Clinton, at the United Nations, called for ridding the world of anti-personnel mines. He also directed the Pentagon to develop alternatives. They never did. While we can drive a robot on Mars 100 million miles away, our own military continues to stockpile landmines that are triggered by the victim. Whether a U.S. soldier or a child, our landmines, like Russian landmines, cannot tell the difference.

If anything good can come of this catastrophic and senseless war in Ukraine, it would be for the international community to bring to justice those responsible for war crimes and for the United States to once and for all renounce the use of anti-personnel landmines. These are not weapons that belong in the arsenals of civilized nations and certainly not in the arsenal of the most powerful, modern military on Earth. Let us be the country that not only denounces their use in Ukraine, but denounces and renounces their use everywhere. What a gift to the world that would be.

I ask unanimous consent that the New York Times article entitled "New Russian Land Mine Poses Special Risk in Ukraine" be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The New York Times, April 6, 2022]
NEW RUSSIAN LAND MINE POSES SPECIAL RISK
IN UKRAINE

(By John Ismay)

WASHINGTON—Russian forces in Ukraine appear to be using a new type of weapon as they step up attacks on civilian targets: an advanced land mine equipped with sensors that can detect when people walk nearby.

Ukrainian bomb technicians discovered the device, called the POM-3, last week near the

eastern city of Kharkiv, according to Human Rights Watch, a leading human rights group, which has reviewed photos provided by Ukraine's military.

Older types of land mines typically explode when victims accidentally step on them or disturb attached tripwires. But the POM-3's seismic sensor picks up on approaching footsteps and can effectively distinguish between humans and animals.

Humanitarian deminers and groups that campaign against the use of land mines said the POM-3 would make future efforts to locate and destroy unexploded munitions in Ukraine vastly more complicated and deadlier.

"These create a threat that we don't have a response for," said James Cowan, who leads the HALO Trust, a British American charity that clears land mines and other explosive remnants of war to help countries recover after conflicts. The group began removing unexploded munitions from the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine in 2016, after Russian-backed separatists started fighting the Ukrainian government.

"We'll need to find some donors to procure robotics that can allow us to deal with these threats at some distance," Mr. Cowan added.

The POM-3 is typically launched by a rocket and falls back to earth by parachute before sticking into the ground—where it waits, according to CAT-UXO, an online resource for military and civilian bomb technicians. When the mine senses a person, it launches a small explosive warhead that detonates midair, producing fragments that are lethal up to about 50 feet away.

Mr. Cowan, a retired British Army major general, said his staff of 430 Ukrainians clearing unexploded munitions in Donbas had been unable to continue working since Russia launched a full invasion of the country in late February, with many staff members temporarily relocating in Ukraine. He anticipates that in the future, HALO's operation across the country will require about 2,500 workers, given that many areas outside Donbas are now contaminated with unexploded munitions as well.

U.S. government officials have said Russia appears to be moving troops to consolidate its hold on Donetsk and Luhansk, which could mean that even more weapons like the POM-3 will be used in the war.

"The war is entering a static phase—trenches are being dug," Mr. Cowan said. "This is the time when I would expect the Russians to start using land mines on a massive basis."

HALO, which stands for Hazardous Area Life-Support Organization, has about 10,000 employees around the world and is among the few international nonprofits that have remained in Afghanistan since the Taliban took control of Kabul, the capital, in August. Mr. Cowan said the future cleanup in Ukraine would require roughly the same number of workers as HALO's current operation in Afghanistan, which is recovering from decades of armed conflict.

The POM-3 is just one new hazard among many that his organization expects to encounter, in addition to an untold number of rockets, bombs and artillery shells that failed to detonate on impact. Russia has also attacked Ukrainian arms depots, causing fires and explosions that typically fling hundreds or even thousands of damaged munitions into surrounding areas.

Once widely used around the world, anti-personnel land mines often kill and maim civilians long after hostilities have ceased. Ukraine is one of the 164 nations that have signed a 1997 treaty banning the use of anti-personnel land mines and pledged to purge their stockpiles. The United States and Russia have refused to join it.

The treaty does not prohibit the use of antitank land mines—which typically have a much larger explosive charge and are designed to detonate only when a vehicle drives over or near them—nor does it address improvised explosive devices built to destroy vehicles. Videos posted on social media purport to show both antitank mines and improvised bomb attacks on Russian vehicles in Ukraine.

Russia's use of land mines was among the discussions at an event on Tuesday on Capitol Hill for the United Nations' international mine awareness day, which brought together groups that focus on the issue and lawmakers from Congress's Unexploded Ordnance/Demining Caucus.

"Wars end, they stay," Senator Patrick J. Leahy, Democrat of Vermont, said of land mines and unexploded munitions. "The targets are invariably civilians, and they are in places where you have a limited ability to provide lifesaving medical care."

"Look at what's happening in Ukraine—Russia is placing land mines in people's homes, as well as children's playgrounds and places where people go," Mr. Leahy said. "That's using it as a weapon of terror."

CONFIRMATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor because today has been a good day for our country. Earlier today, the U.S. Senate voted to confirm Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Not only did this Chamber make history, we also bore witness—in a small but powerful way—to the bending of the moral arc towards justice. We realized the promise of America: the promise that every child—regardless of their skin color, their ethnicity, or the ZIP code they are born into—can rise to their highest station in life. We cemented our fundamental belief that, here in America, if you reach further and aim higher, anything is possible.

I submit to my colleagues that the story of Judge Jackson is the story of our great Nation. Together with her impeccable credentials and evenhanded record, there was simply no reason to oppose the confirmation of such a talented, well-qualified, and fair-minded jurist. It is why I could not have been prouder to cast my vote, a vote on behalf of New Jerseyans everywhere, to elevate her to the highest Court in the land.

Judge Jackson has lived a life in the mold of the great strivers in our history. Her nomination alone was a testament to the progress—often deferred or denied—but nonetheless the progress we have achieved on our 246-year struggle for a more perfect union.

I could not be prouder that we etched it into stone and confirmed her to the Court, proving to women and girls everywhere that, if they work hard and reach for the stars, they too can be one of the nine guardians entrusted by the Constitution to ensure equal justice under law for all people. As we celebrate this historic moment, consider the senior quote ascribed to Judge Jackson in her high school yearbook: "I want to go into law and eventually have a judicial appointment."

As we stand here, after extending her the judicial appointment of all judicial appointments, it may seem predestined. It may have seemed like this day is the culmination of her destiny. But to hear Judge Jackson tell it herself, one realizes that, in fact, none of it was predetermined. None of it was fate. Simply put, it was the brilliance and grit of a young woman from South Florida—and the love of her family who surrounded her—that made this vote possible. As a student at Miami Palmetto Senior High School, Ms. Ketanji Brown was class president, chess club president, and a star on the powerhouse speech and debate team.

Her parents, Ellery and Johnny Brown, were teachers who taught her the value of education as they rose to lead their peers as a principal and chief counsel for Miami-Dade County schools. In addition to public education, her family is steeped in a law enforcement background. Her younger brother worked in undercover drug stings for the Baltimore Police Department. One of her uncles was a detective attached to a sex crimes unit, while another uncle was Miami's chief of police.

And yet it is the experience of seeing a third uncle, her Uncle Thomas, sentenced to life in prison for a nonviolent cocaine offense, that rounds out her early understanding of our criminal justice system. In 2005, Judge Jackson would eventually set in motion a chain of events that ended with President Obama commuting her uncle's sentence. But before that could happen, before she joined major law firms and the Federal public defender's office—before she served as Vice Chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission and as a judge on the Federal bench—she was first a daughter, a sister, and a niece.

And it is there, in the pages of Judge Jackson's story, as a product of public schools who saw our country's justice system up close, where we can find her judgment. It is there where we can find the reasons for my colleague, Senator BOOKER, to declare to her on national television: "You have earned this spot. You are worthy. You are a great American."

So much ink has been spilled about the historic nature of Judge Jackson's nomination and now confirmation. She stood before the Senate as a nominee descendant from slaves who grew up listening to her parents' stories of attending segregated schools, a nominee who was once told by a guidance counselor that she shouldn't set her sights so high when applying to Harvard; a nominee who not only graduated as the second generation in her family to earn a college degree but who silenced naysayers and doubters alike by graduating, with honors, from both Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

Simply put, soon-to-be Justice Jackson belongs on the highest Court in the land. Her confirmation is a milestone in the grand tapestry of our country—not only because she has broken barriers as the first African-American

woman and the first to have served as a public defender, but rather, it is because she is supremely qualified to interpret our Constitution and hear cases on their merit. When she is sworn in, Justice Jackson will have more experience as a trial court judge than any of her colleagues on the Court. In fact, she will be the second Justice ever to have experience at all three levels of our Federal judiciary. The first, a legal trailblazer in her own right, is Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

It is therefore only fitting that, as I have thought about what this day means for our country, I am reminded of the parallels between this historic nomination and the historic nomination for Justice Sotomayor. Back then, in 2009, I said, "when she takes her seat on the United States Supreme Court, we will only need to look at the portrait of the justices to see how far we've come as a nation, who we really are as a people, and what our founders intended us to be."

Those words have never rung more true. A woman who, when the Constitution was written, would have counted in the eyes of the law as three-fifths of her fellow Americans, will now carry out justice for every single citizen who calls this Nation home. In the midst of disgusting attacks, racial dog whistles turned into foghorns, and gross mischaracterizations of her record, Judge Jackson maintained a calm demeanor throughout her nomination with almost superhuman poise.

For my colleagues who opposed her nomination today, yet voted to confirm her to the Sentencing Commission, the district court, and to the appeals court just last year, I leave them to iron out their double standards. But to all who rejoice in what is to come, when Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson will soon place her hand on the Bible and takes her solemn oath of office, I submit the following:

More than ever before, the newest portrait of our nine Supreme Court justices will more clearly reflect who we are as a nation and what we stand for as a fair, just, and hopeful people.

Unlike other nations, those united by a singular history, language, and culture, this nation—our Nation—is united by our diversity. It is evident in our national motto—the one stamped on every coin in our pocket and etched on the ceiling of our Capitol dome, *E pluribus Unum*: out of many one. And it is despite these differences that our country comes together as a vast melting pot, one forged in common values and an ideal of freedom that stands as a beacon to the world.

As Judge Jackson takes her rightful place on the Supreme Court, the full realization of that ideal is closer than it has ever been. I know this for I have lived it—as Judge Jackson has lived it—and I feel it, as so many others in this country have felt it. I stand here, the son of Cuban refugees, the first in my family to attend college, and now, in a nation of 330 million, as one of only 100 Members of the U.S. Senate.